

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES



THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 24, 2004

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FM: ROBERT E. WALLACE, Executive Director *Wallace*
VFW Washington Office

RE: **VETERANS HEALTH CARE FUNDING**

On behalf of the 2.6 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and our Ladies Auxiliary, it is my duty to inform you that the FY 2005 House Budget Resolution does not provide adequate funding to meet the needs of sick and disabled veterans seeking care from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system. As such, I encourage you to vote it down!

With the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid projecting a 7.8% increase in health care spending and VA officials testifying that the veterans' health care system requires a 13-14% increase annually and the House Veterans Affairs Committee's Views and Estimates recommended a \$2.5 billion increase to maintain current VA health care services, the House Budget Committee has chosen to ignore their colleagues' expert recommendations and the facts. Further, the VFW, in testimony before the House Budget Committee, identified a need for a \$3.2 billion increase.

This budget will do nothing to help the thousands of veterans waiting six months or more to see a primary care physician; in fact, it will drive many out of the system all together. You or I would not accept this type of health care so why should America's veterans? The VFW recommended level of funding is also critical to caring for those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. This funding request tracks the real needs of the VA to provide quality health care in a timely manner to all veterans enrolled in the system.

Again, I encourage you and your colleagues to vote the budget down! Veterans Health Care funding must be increased if this nation is to meet its obligation to those men and women who have so valiantly served her.